

Acceptance

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Summary: Tragedy has fallen on Serena and she is forced to flee. She returns six years later as Selene Thompson famous photographer with a few surprises in tow. New friends meet old friends and a new enemy has appeared.

Acceptance

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Chapter 1: Shattered

Thunder and lightning created havoc in the skies above echoing her rioting emotions. The battle ground was littered with the evidence of their toil. The stench of blood was heavy in the air although she figured that most of it was hers. Those she had once thought of as friends and family surrounded her. Their words of accusations and insults increasing in volume to be heard over the raging wind. She looked to each one as they continued their verbal assault making her wonder why she even bothered to show up at all.

"We called you almost an hour ago. Do you realize that we could have been killed?"

Rei's voice carried to her ears and soon followed by Lita.

"Serena this has gone on for too long. When are you going to grow up?"

On and on they went. Complaint after complaint. She could feel the tears burning to be free but she forced them back. She was tired, hurt and her world shattering around her and yet she couldn't bring herself to turn away from them.

"Please just let me explainâ€¦"

She tried once more to explain why she had been late but once again she was interrupted.

"We don't want to hear your excuses anymore Serena. As of this moment on you are no longer part of our team."

Again she could feel the pain of their betrayal stab at her. She looked to the man she had loved, the man who her soul called for, and the man who had broken her heart. In his eyes she could see his disappointment before he looked away. His silence was her breaking point.

"Enough."

Her voice was barely more than a whisper but it was enough. The raging weather seemed to stop at her word and froze those before in its cold command. The momentary silence was broken by Luna.

"No Serena. It's not enough. Its time you listened to what we have to say."

Serena turned her gaze upon the feline.

"Silence. You forget who you are speaking to. I am not a child to be directed by the likes of you. I am Princess Serenity of the Moon. My royal lineage deserves respect and you shall give it or suffer the penalty."

She turned her cold gaze to each of her former guardians. Each stared back at her in shocked disbelief.

"If you all are worried about my abilities as a leader then I will gladly resign. You seem to be under the misconception that you don't need me in battle but the opposite is true. From this moment on you are on your own. Do not come to me. Do not speak to me because if you do then I will turn a deaf ear to your pleas and trust me when I say that you will come to recognize the error that you have made tonight."

She started to turn away when she felt a firm grip on her wrist. She looked at the offending hand before she looked at its owner.

"Give us the crystal Serena. You no longer need it."

Serena shook her head sadly at her before sending a pulse of power that threw Rei backwards into Mina.

"You presume too much Rei. The crystal has always been and will always be mine. Attempt to take it and you will not like the consequences."

She turned away from them and began to walk into the darkness of the night and away from her betrayers. The last thing she heard was their gasps before she was out of their reach. Her mind was blank as she made her way home and into her room. Still she didn't allow herself to think because if she did then she might change her mind. Methodically she packed her things until all that was left was a shell of her room. It wasn't until she entered her parents room that she allowed the tears she had been holding back to fall.

She had been holding it back for far longer than even her friends knew. There had been a reason she was late tonight. Several of them in fact. She had been receiving her families' personal belongings. That night she had lost her parents and younger brother in a car accident. It was in the station that she had been called to the fight. Despite everything she refused to leave her friends to fight alone. She had almost made it but was caught by surprise by a youma. In the end she had defeated it but it had managed to rake its claws along her back leaving a bloody mess in its wake. Still she forced herself to run to the battle in time to destroy the creature. By then though it had been too late. Her friends were hurt, as far as she could tell they were minor injuries but still the damage was done and her friends and former love had turned on her.

She wished they had allowed her to speak. She wished a great many things but none would be granted so she left her wishing behind. Oh how little they knew; how very little they remembered. Unlike them she remembered everything. She had for a very long time which is why this betrayal had hurt her so much. Their friendship had spanned lifetimes and yet they are not who they once were and so her memories of them meant very little in this life.

Sighing she forced her tears to stop as she looked around her parents room. She had much to do and very little time to do it. Straightening her shoulders she set to work. She spent the rest of the night boxing up her family's belongings and settling them in the living room downstairs. By the time she was done the sun had risen and the birds chirped incessantly. A new day. A new life. Sometime between her cleaning she had bought a one way ticket to California. She would be leaving Tokyo and all the memories it held behind.

Taping up the last box she moved into the kitchen and picked up the phone and dialed. It rang three times before someone picked up.

"Hello?"

Serena smiled at the sunny voice of her friend.

"Jessica? It's Serena."

There was an excited squeal that had Serena pulling the phone away from her ear. She waited a moment before pressing it against back to her ear.

"Serena it's been so long. How are you?"

Serena hesitated for a moment before allowing herself to speak.

"Iâ€|.Iâ€|I'm coming to California. My flight leaves this afternoon."

Jessica held the phone to her shoulder and held up a finger to Justin who was sitting across from her. There was something wrong with her friend. She could hear it in her voice.

"Serena, what's wrong?"

Serena closed her eyes at the concern in her friend's voice. How was

it that her friend who was thousands of miles away knew that there was something wrong and yet those who were right beside her had no clue? Once again forcing her tears back she explained what had happened. By the time she hung up she felt more steady then she had. Jessica had listened and consoled her before promising to pick her up from the airport.

She spent the rest of her time visiting the bank and closing out her accounts before visiting her parent's lawyer. Her parents had left her a sizeable inheritance and the house. When she made it to the house she picked up her belongings and closed the door behind her. Staring at the house she had grown up in she made a promise that she would return one day.

"Ms Tsukino?"

Serena turned away from the house and stared at the man standing behind her.

"I'm here to take you to the airport Miss. Are you ready?"

Was she ready? Sighing for the umpteenth time that day she nodded and handed him her things before following him to the car. Without looking behind her she got in and they drove away. It would be years before she would ever set foot back in Tokyo.

****Temple grounds****

The scouts had been arguing amongst themselves as they had been since the night before. None of them had been in their right minds last night. They had discovered during their many arguments that they had all been sharing dreams of Serena dying. It had been a never ending sequence of nightmares that kept them up at night. That coupled with the attacks that had been happening almost on a nightly basis had them all on edge. When Serena had shown up late as always it was as if she had become their target for all their pent up frustrations. Her command had come as a surprise to them. They had never heard her speak as she had done the night before. So full of authority and confidence; it was as if the Princess had once again possessed her and yet not. The power she had used to throw Rei back had shocked them. She hadn't moved, she hadn't said a word. The power had just risen up and blasted the raven haired girl back but of all the things that had shocked them was the blood running from the vicious wounds on her back.

They had called out to her but she had already disappeared. Worried and disturbed by the events they had tried to call her but she hadn't responded. Ami had wanted to go to Serena's house to check on her but Luna had been against it. It would be better to give the girl time and then they would go see her. They would grovel in apology if that's what was needed but for now they would give her space.

That had been hours ago. Now they all sat in mournful silence as they were lost in their thoughts. Luna took the opportunity to study Darien. He had been quiet as the girls had argued and had only spoken when they had mentioned the dreams. It had surprised them to find out that he had been having the dreams far longer than them and it had been what caused him to break it off with Serena. Luna could see his heartbreak written on his face and yet she had no words of comfort to give him so she left him to his thoughts and moved over to turn on

the t.v. It had become a habit of hers to watch the news to see what was going on in the world and so she turned up the news to watch the most recent report.

"â€¦last night a terrible car accident took the lives of a familyâ€¦."

Luna lifted the remote to change the channel to a different channel in search of any new reports on Youma but the next words from the reporter caught her attention.

"The Tsukino family leaves behind their daughter and our condolences go out to herâ€¦"

Luna could feel tears gather as she stared at the T.V.

"Noâ€¦Ohâ€¦noâ€¦Serena; oh what have we done?"

Lita noticed Luna's stilled form and knelt next to her.

"Luna? What is it?"

Luna turned her horrified gaze to Lita.

"Serena's family was in an accident yesterday. They didn't survive."

Lita shook her head in denial. No.

"That's why she was late. Oh my god. Luna we have to go to her. Now."

Luna nodded her head and called to the others. She explained what she had seen and watched as all the faces around her mimicked her own horror. They all flew out the door and made it to Serena's house in record time. There was a moving truck there and people moving in and out of the house. Darien ignored them all and rushed into the house.

"Serena!"

His desperate cry caused the workers to pause briefly before they continued moving boxes. A man dressed in a three piece suit walked up to him just as the girls made it to his side.

"May I help you?"

The man asked.

Rei stepped forward and placed a comforting hand on Darien shoulder.

"Please sir, could you please tell us where our friend Tsukino Serena is?"

The man gazed at them sadly before responding.

"My name is Hikari Hinto. I am the Tsukino's lawyer and I'm sorry young lady but Ms. Tsukino has left the country."

Hinto stared at the group. It was easy to see the devastation on their faces and as much as he would like to let them know where their friend had gone she had left instructions that her location remain unknown.

"Did she tell you where she went?"

Darien couldn't help his question. He couldn't think much beyond the pain that was radiating from his heart. All he wanted was his Serena back.

Hinto shook his head before answering.

"I'm sorry sir but the young miss did not disclose that information. Now if you excuse me I have to finish overseeing the movers."

Hinto nodded his head in farewell before turning back to the movers. He heard them shuffle out and sighed. What could have possibly happened to his client that would cause her to run away from home?

Darien's apartment

He leaned against his balcony sipping his brandy while staring at the moon. As if it held the secrets of his lost love. He closed his eyes against the soft moonlight when it gave him no answers. Was this his fate? To have loved the same woman and lose her? Why did the dreams plague them? Who sent them? Why had he chosen to push her away because of a fucking dream? The questions kept circling over and over and still the answers remained elusive. Growling he tossed back the rest of his drink and turned back toward the kitchen to pour another drink. He tried to reach out through their link but she didn't respond leaving him desolate in this isolation that he had created for himself.

"Serena"

Her name slipped from his lips in an agonized whisper. He knew that the others were all wallowing in their own form of despair but he couldn't bring himself to wallow with them. Their pain was different from his. They had lost their friend and leader which he knew was painful but he had lost his soul mate and that was devastating. He shared a bond with Serena that the others would never have and now he had lost that as well. Tears fell from his eyes as he stared at a photo of him and Serena. They had been so happy, so in love. What had he done? What had they all done? He knew that tomorrow he would begin his search but tonight all he wanted to do was drink away his sorrow. He proceeded to do just that.

California six years later

"Justin!"

Jessica screeched as she ran out of the bathroom. Serena had been in the middle of meditating when a torpedo with bright pink hair ran past her door. Her concentration broken she gave up and wondered out of her room and down stairs to find the children wrestling on the floor. Pressing a finger to her lips she hid her smile as she looked at her best friends rolling around like lunatics on the living room

floor.

"You jerk. You monster. You toad! I'm going to kill you!"

Jessica screeched once more as Justin pinned her down and straddled her.

His cropped blonde hair was tousled and his grey eyes twinkled down in mischievous humor at the girl below him.

"What's the matter cupcake? Don't like the new do?"

His words only caused her to buck harder.

"Justin I swear by all that's holy I'm going to flay you alive!"

He chuckled down at her as he tightened his grip on her.

"Awe come on! You're the one who started it! You don't have to get violent."

Jessica turned her head to the side and bit the closest thing to her, which happened to be the side of his hand. Her teeth sank in and he yelped in pain and fell off her. Jessica sat up and went for him.

"You bone head! The itch powder wasn't me that was Zach!"

Justin turned his head to glare at the silent man leaning against the dining room table. Zach shifted his lean frame as he tilted his wavy auburn hair hung heavy against his neck and his green eyes were shining with mirth. Just pushed Jessica off of him and ran towards his friend. Sighing Serena snatched his shirt as he ran by.

"That's enough. Justin YOU started it when you gave Zach a haircut while he slept. Zach revenge is shameful and Jessica pink looks good on you but we'll head to the salon as soon as you're dressed. Zach please call Kevin and Nick. I'm sure you all would enjoy a good workout at the gym. I have a few more details I have to work out at the office before our move so Jessica and I won't be home until late. I expect that the house will be in one piece when we return. While we are gone I want you to finish packing because we leave early tomorrow morning. Understood?"

They all bowed their head and in unison they answered.

"Yes Serena."

Smiling brightly she let go of Justin and waved Jessica upstairs. Crossing her arms she smirked at Justin and tugged on his ear.

"You ARE a Jerk."

He reached up and clasped her hand in his and squeezed.

"Brat."

She laughed at tugged his ear again before waving good bye to them both.

Justin stared after her as Zach placed a heavy hand on his shoulder.

"This is dangerous."

Justin spared him a glance before moving away to reach for the phone.

"What is?"

Zach shook his head at his friend.

"You know what I'm talking about. She's not meant for you."

Justin clenched his fist at his side. He wanted to deck him but he knew that Zach was right. It was the reason why he had kept his feelings to himself for so long. It didn't mean he had to like it.

"You don't think that I know that? I tell myself that every day but still there's a part of me that screams that he doesn't deserve her. He turned his back on her. They all turned their back on her. So why can't I just keep her for myself?"

Zach felt for his friend. He truly did but Justin would get hurt when Endymion comes back into the picture. Of course none of them would let him close until Serenity was ready but eventually she would be and it would crush his friend. If their prince didn't exist in this life then he could see his friends happy and in love but that was not meant to be.

"Because she was never yours to keep. She's already been claimed Justin and you must accept that. Serenity has a destiny and we are meant to see her through it as her friends, her companions and her guard. Nothing more."

Sighing Justin turned away from his friend and picked up a photo of them all.

"When she first arrived and we all met her our memories surfaced. I never told anyone but I remembered loving her. I remembered wanting her but never having her. I remember that I had remained in the shadows because she loved our prince and she was happy. She's not happy anymore and I struggle with the urge to contain that ever present love. Then I had Mars but she and I both knew that there was no true love between us. Now I don't have anything to hold me back."

Zach laid a consoling hand on his friend's shoulder.

"Your honor is what holds you back. Your honor and oath to your prince and by extension the princess. I know that I can't stop you from loving her but I urge you to love her from a distance."

Closing his eyes he took a steadying breath and put the photo back down before picking up the phone and dialing.

"Kevin? Let's go to the gym. I have the urge to beat the shit out of something."

House of Selene

Serenity put the last of her work away before looking at her watch. 10:30 pm. She pinched the bridge of her nose trying to ease the pressure that had built after looking over the latest batch of photos. Jessica had fallen asleep on the couch and Serena smiled her angelic visage. She had been her life saver. They all had been. It had been such a shock to her when she had been introduced to Jessica's friends. Even though it had been an unexpected surprise she was thankful for it. She had known that Beryl's generals had been clones and had truly believed that they had not been reborn. Now here they were and she loved them all. They had been her rock. Her strength and she was eternally grateful for their friendship.

Over the last six years they had formed a bond that would never be broken. The shrill ring of her phone startled her from her thoughts. Picking up the phone she pressed it to her ear.

"Yes I know Nick. I'm waking Jess up now and then we'll head home."

She smiled as she hung up and moved to wake Jessica. Moving around her desk she gently shook her shoulder.

"Jess. Wake up it's time to go home."

Jess mumbled before blinking tired eyes at Serena.

"Finished?"

Serena helped Jessica up as she answered.

"Yes. I've finished and left everything in my desk. You can handle everything from here."

Jessica nodded as she gathered her things.

"I can do this Serena."

Serena smiled at her friend before linking arms with her.

"I have no doubt that you can. It's why I'm leaving my business in your hands."

They chatted on their way down to the garage about various in's and out of her photography business until they were settled in the car. It was a silent drive home since Jessica had fallen asleep again as soon as she got comfortable. Serena chuckled as she drove. Six years had really changed her. At twenty one she had grown into a graceful competent woman. She had worked hard to raise her grades and had managed to get her high school equivalent at the age of sixteen. She had gone to college and studied photography. She had made a name for herself in the Industry. She had changed her name to Selene Thompson for business purposes a fact that proved a worthy idea since her name was known around the world. She never allowed her photograph to be taken which many had found odd since she herself was a photographer.

Many had tried to encourage her to be on the other end of the camera.

She had often been told that she would be the perfect model. She knew that her looks had often garnered her too much attention but she couldn't help the way she looked and she wouldn't want to. At 5'8 she was tall and lean. Her curves had filled out and her face had lost some of its roundness and her eyes had turned to a silver blue. Her layered hair had changed from blonde to silver and reached to the back of her knees. She wondered briefly if the others would recognize her if they saw her. They had seen a pigtailed blonde princess with blue eyes and a pretty dress once or twice before but they had no idea of what she would look like once she hit maturity.

Sighing again she maneuvered the car into the drive way and put it in park before calling Nick.

"Are you almost home?"

Serena smiled as she unbuckled Jessica and herself.

"I'm in the drive way but I need you to come carry Jess. She's passed out."

She heard his warm chuckle before she saw him exit the house. He moved around the car and opened the door and poked his copper head into the car. She smiled into his brown eyes before gathering their things and exited the car. She waited for Nick to shut the door after picking up Jessica before locking the doors and following him them inside.

She watched as he climbed the stairs and disappeared down the hall before she set down their things and locked up the house. It was late and everyone was asleep except for them. Tomorrow they had a long flight back to Tokyo and she didn't blame them for not waiting up for her.

It was hard to believe that they would be leaving. She wanted to say that she was over her past but she wasn't. At least not fully. She still ached inside at the loss of her other half. She had kept tabs on them all and so she knew that they had been continuing the fight but beyond that she had left them to their lives.

"Serena?"

She turned at Nick's call. He held out a hand to her and she took it without hesitation and let him pull her into his arms.

"All will be well Princess. We will be with you."

She nodded into his chest and allowed his calm presence calm her.

"I know. I was just lost in thoughts for a minute there. Come on. We both need to get some sleep."

Together they climbed the stairs. He pressed a kiss into her hair and wished her good night before walking to his own room.

Serena closed the door behind her and removed her clothes. Pulling on her favorite vampire bunny t-shirt she slipped into bed and snuggled into her pillow. Her last thought was that she was once again making a change in her life. Tomorrow would be a new day.

Tokyo: Haneda Airport

Lita waved at her friend good bye as she watched her board her plane. When Samantha was out of her sight she turned away and walked towards the doors. She had intended to go straight home but got distracted from the crowd that had been gathering around the baggage claim. Out of curiosity she altered her path and pushed her way through the mass of people until she spotted what had drawn the crowd. Apparently a group of ridiculously gorgeous people had recently arrived to Tokyo. She counted four men that could have climbed directly out of a G.Q magazine that stood in a close circle around something that captured their complete attention. Lita grinned at the thought of rubbing this in Mina's face. A bell like laugh drew her eyes towards the center of the group when the men moved to pick up the luggage. She like many others who spotted the goddess several feet away from them. The woman had long silver hair that hung in heavy waves down to her knees. She wore a deep purple sleeveless t-shirt that was tucked into faded black skinny jeans that covered mile high legs and purple strappy stilettos. Her silver eyes flashed in delight as the blonde man in the group leaned down to whisper in her ear. Once again her laughter chimed in the air and for some reason Lita found it hard to breath.

The rest of the men gathered around the woman and the blonde wrapped his arm around the woman's shoulders as they moved as one out of the airport. Lita finally managed to catch her breath and soon followed them out. They were no were in sight and she tried to shake the strange sense of familiarity that had overcome her. It was late and she was tired. Perhaps she had been imagining things but for some strange reason Serena had popped into her head. Shaking her head again moved towards her car ready to get some sleep. She didn't want to think about Serena right now. If she allowed herself to then she would fall into depression at the loss of her friend. Sighing she got in, turned on the engine and drove home. Tomorrow she would think about the strange feeling that had hit her like a tidal wave.

End
file.